

1865 Needs of Valor  
Vol I

## SAVED A BATTALION

THE regular brigade of the Army of the Cumberland consisting of battalions from the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Nineteenth, and two of the Eighteenth regiments of infantry and Battery H, Fifth Artillery, marched early on a gray frosty morning, December 31, 1862, from Stewart's Creek, where it had bivouacked during the night, to the battlefield of Stone River or Murfreesboro, Tenn., arriving there at about eight o'clock. After having been drawn up in column for possibly an hour the brigade was ordered into the 'cedars to the support of the right wing which was obviously being forced back by the enemy.

The two battalions of the Eighteenth formed the left wing, the other three battalion the right wing. The position of the battery was between the battalion of the Sixteenth and the Second Battalion of the Eighteenth, the right and left wings.

The infantry marched into the woods and after a march of about fifteen minutes on a wood road, the battalions of the Eighteenth regiment received orders to halt—which order was executed.

After some ten minutes or more had elapsed Major Frederick Townsend, commanding the detachment of the Eighteenth Infantry consisting of his own, the Second and the First Battalions, received orders to return and support the battery of the brigade. This order indicated that the battery was to the rear,—yet, there was a possibility that it might have gone to the front on another road and joined the right wing. In order to make sure that this was not the case, Major Townsend sent an orderly to the rear to find the battery and Lieutenant Frederick Phisterer, his adjutant, volunteered to go to the front, find the remainder of the brigade and ascertain whether or not the battery was with it. After a gallop of about ten minutes along the wood road, which first lead directly toward the approaching enemy and then turned to the right along his front, Lieutenant Phisterer came up with the battalion of the Sixteenth Infantry under Major Slemmer which was engaged with the enemy and under a heavy fire. From the moment that he had come to the turn in the road he had been exposed to musketry fire which increased in force as he came nearer the battalion of the Sixteenth.



FREDERICK PHISTERER,  
1st Lieutenant, 18th U. S. Infantry.  
Highest rank attained: Brevet Brig-Gen., N. Y. N. G.  
Born in Germany.



He reported to Major Slemmer, inquired if the major had seen anything of the battery, and received the information that Major Slemmer had not seen anything of it and did not know its whereabouts.

This showed conclusively that the battery was not in advance as it was thought possible to be. Lieutenant Phisterer informed Major Slemmer of the orders received by Major Townsend. This was the first intimation Major Slemmer had received of any movement since he had struck the enemy, and as there was no support on his left and any delay might cause the capture of his battalion, Major Slemmer decided to fall back.

Lieutenant Phisterer then returned by the road over which he had come under a very uncomfortable fire, and rejoined his battalion, which he found moving out of the woods into the open field, there to support the brigade battery of whose whereabouts the orderly sent by Major Townsend had brought word.

Lieutenant Phisterer, in voluntarily going to the front and continuing his search for the battery in the face of a heavy fire from the enemy until he found the left battalion of the right wing of the brigade, imparting to its commanding officer the situation and the orders received by the left wing of the brigade, unquestionably saved that battalion at least and probably another battalion to its right from annihilation or capture. The brigade had but barely formed in support of its battery in the new position of the latter, when the enemy came out of the woods and made most determined and repeated efforts to take the battery, which efforts were, however, sturdily defeated by the latter, its regular supports, and additional troops formed to the left and right of the brigade; the determined assault showing that the strength of the enemy greatly exceeded the few hundred men of the right wing of the regular brigade engaging him but half an hour before



SQUIRE E. HOWARD,  
1st Sergeant, 8th Vt. Infantry.  
Highest rank attained: Captain.  
Born in Jamaica, Vt., May 15, 1840.

## “FOR GOD’S SAKE, RUN!”—HE RAN

JANUARY 13, 1863, a force of infantry, which included the Eighth Vermont Infantry and four small gun-boats, under General Godfrey Weitzel, attacked an entrenched force of the enemy, supported by the Cotton, a very formidable ironclad gun-boat, at a point on the Bayou Teche, La. The object of the expedition was the destruction of the ironclad, as she was much more powerful than any other of the fleet, and threatened the safety of the camps at Brashear City.

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